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ABSTRACT

The recommendations of a group of 18 persons on the needs of speech-communication instructors in two-year colleges are presented in this paper. The recommendations of the group fall into two categories: problems which need solving to improve the ability of speech-communication teachers in community-junior colleges to better meet the needs of the community, and steps which the Central States Speech Association (CSSA) can take to promote this problem solution. Some of the problems identified in category 1 include: development of materials to aid remedial students of speech-communication as well as students who use English as a second language; development of ideas, methods, and promotions which will extend the speech-communication teacher into the community to create more student demand for courses at the two-year college; promotion of more forensics tournaments to draw high school students to community-junior college speech programs; and development of workshops to service specific needs of the community. Recommendations in category 2 include: CSSA and State association providing more leadership, promoting exchange between community-junior college instructors and four-year instructors, and publishing a journal oriented to practical concerns of teaching techniques. (WR)

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Speech Communication in the Community-Junior College: Proposals for Development

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With the steady advance of students enrolled, both full-time and part-time in community-junior colleges across this country, educators in two-year and four-year institutions have begun to raise some common questions about the function of speech-communication courses in higher education. Some of the questions which have been raised include:

1) In what ways do the community-junior colleges differ in their role of service from four-year institutions? What communication education functions can two-year colleges fulfill more effectively than four-year institutions?
2) In what ways do public attitudes, professional attitudes, state legislative bodies, and four-year institutions hamper or dampen the ability of speech communication educators at two-year colleges to reach out to their community to fulfill the potential which can

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best be met by the two-year college speech teacher? In what ways can these barriers be overcome?

3) In what ways can teachers of speech-communication at the community-junior college level gain additional ability to generate demand for their courses and programs, learn techniques of planning course material relevant to the needs of the two-year college students, and master methods of teaching communication skills relevant to the more diverse need of the community college student?

4) In what ways can members of regional speech associations take initiative to lead speech-communication teachers toward solving the unique problems of the community-junior college speech-communication instructor?

The raising of these questions is long overdue, as is the responsiveness by National, Regional, State Speech Associations to try to find answers to these questions. As early as 1971, Berko "recommended that regional and state speech organizations be encouraged to expand their present program to encourage community-junior college representation. At the April 1, 1971, Central States Speech Association Convention, the question was raised as to why certain groups of individuals, including the group of two-year college instructors, seemed to be absent from the meeting. When it was pointed out that not one meeting of specific interest to community-junior college instructors had been planned, the general reaction of a planning committee member present was that he was unaware there was a need for such sessions.[1]"

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[1]Roy Merle Berko, "Speech Programs at Coeducational Community-Junior Colleges," (Doctoral dissertation, Department of Speech, The Pennsylvania State University, 1971), p. 159.

In an attempt to generate answers to these questions and problems, and to provide direction for the leadership of Central States Speech Association, Kenneth Andersen, President-Elect of CSSA asked the writer to chair a caucus on the needs of speech-communication instructors in two-year colleges at the April, 1974, convention in Milwaukee.

Eighteen persons met during this caucus, six of whom represented four-year institutions; the remainder were affiliated with two-year institutions, or high schools. The participants were formed into three groups and were asked to respond to the question, "What specific problems and needs do you have, unique to the two-year college, and in what ways can Central States Speech Association serve to meet these needs?" One and one-quarter hours of discussion allowed generation of ideas from each group, followed by a quarter-hour review of each group's suggestion. With this "Phillips 66 technique," all persons had maximum chance to make suggestions. Each group was responsible for recording its suggestions on paper from which the writer summarized the recommended proposals.

The recommendations of the group fall into two broad categories: (A) "Problems which need solving to improve the ability of speech-communication teachers in community-junior colleges to better meet the needs of the community," and (B) "Steps which CSSA can take to promote this problem-solution."

A. Problems which need solving to improve the ability of speech-communication teachers in community-junior colleges to better meet the needs of the community."

1. Material needs to be developed to aid remedial students of speech-communication as well as those students who use English as a second language and who possess below minimum levels of speech competency upon entering a basic speech course.
2. Assistance is seen to be needed in the further improvement of speech fundamental and interpersonal communication courses since, at the community-college level, students have many different needs than those of four-year schools. This would improve the need for more advanced speech-communication courses at two-year and four-year schools.
3. Further ideas, methods, and promotions need to be developed which will extend the speech-communication teacher into the community to create more student demand for courses at the two-year college. Where continuing education programs do not exist, they should include speech type courses (such as oral reading, communication skills for community groups, i.e. Kiwanis Club, Secretarial Club, Lions Club). Speaker's Bureau should be vigorously promoted at each community junior college with speech teachers offering training for the speakers, as well as speaking on related topics.
4. A need exists to promote more forensics tournaments to draw high school students to community-junior college speech programs, as well as taking forensics groups into the community (to prisons, hospitals, nursing homes, high schools, and grade schools) to stimulate interest in the liberal arts or continuing education speech programs.

5. Of high importance is the need for developing workshops through continuing education (or other means) to service specific needs of the community. Such workshops might include conference participation and leadership, interpersonal communication skills, personal development.

6. It was also noted that techniques of planning, developing, and executing innovative communication programs for special-interest groups are needed. These would be either liberal arts or general certificate types of courses, tailored by time and need constraints of those groups, such as:

    a. Interpersonal communication skills for senior citizens
    b. Communication skills for the aged (at nursing homes) including theatre, dance, speech-making, pantomime, etc.
    c. Interpersonal communication for prisoner education
    d. Speech fundamentals for business and industry
    e. Management of communication and public relations in industry
    f. Interpersonal communication for nurses
    g. Group dynamics in organizational settings

Thus, the skills which two-year college speech-communication teachers need to learn are to be able to <u>discover</u> community needs, <u>diagnose</u> specific communication skills to be taught, <u>plan</u> and organize this material according to goals expected, and <u>execute</u> those goals.

B. Steps which CSSA can take to promote problem solution:

1. Members of all three groups felt that CSSA and other national, regional and state speech associations needed to recognize and welcome the community-junior college teacher by offering many

convention programs (and publicity for those programs) for this level. Included would be swap-shops, training sessions, colloquies, etc., but would not include "academic research," lengthy monographs, and other studies less relevant to the teaching of speech-communication.

2. CSSA and state associations can provide leadership and political pressure to make Associate of Arts speech courses more transferable to Bachelor of Arts programs offered at four-year schools. This would not only help two-year colleges be able to increase the strength of their speech program, but also help four-year institutions by increasing the number of students fed upward to them from two-year schools.
3. Through the conventions, CSSA can provide guidance to speech-communication teachers at the community-junior college by instituting instruction in collective bargaining techniques with administrators, and in developing in-service training for speech teachers to aid faculty input at their two-year colleges.
4. Participants felt that community-junior colleges have been regarded as just "junior colleges," and that most community-junior colleges had earned great respect from their own community, but not from the members of the profession from four-year schools. The need for attitude change, it was felt, was one of vital importance to the healthy professional relationship needed by members of the speech profession in two- and four-year schools. For this reason, the community-junior college needs recognition as a community college, and public relations to achieve the establishment of that posture. Also, visibility in CSSA, SCA,

and other associations would be expanded by development of community-junior college work groups and caucuses.

5. Central States Speech Association and other speech-communication associations can aid the two-year college speech instructor by providing skill sessions for course development so that more degree and certificate courses can be taken out to the community organizations. Important to the teacher is the ability to diagnose needs, sell the course product to companies, agencies and industries, and innovate means of executing the goals developed. This is not seen as in conflict with the role of the four-year college speech-communication instructor, as his role is usually one of diagnostic consultant. At the community-junior college level, the need is to implement those needed communication skills to as many organizations as possible.

6. CSSA and other associations could bring to special meetings or conferences key resource persons from social and government agencies, civic groups, business and trade organizations to discuss communication skills most needed by personnel in those industries.

7. Speech Associations should promote more exchange between community-junior college instructors and those of four-year schools so that each is more knowledgeable in the other's needs and goals.

8. CSSA should also encourage the development and pursuit of an academic degree beyond the Masters level which would stress teaching over research, such as the Doctor of Arts now available at some schools.

9. To stress the importance of the role of teaching in the two-year college, it is recommended that CSSA distinguish between two- and four-year college speech teachers for the Outstanding Teacher Award. Perhaps new or revised criterion for this selection are in order as the present criterion seem to stress research for the PhD.

10. There are two structural changes suggested for CSSA, to more accurately reflect the needs of its constituancy. The first is to enlarge to three the number of persons serving on executive committees such that high schools, two-year colleges, and four-year colleges are more equally represented. The second is that representatives of at least those three levels should sit on all CSSA committees.

11. As a meaningful step toward accepting the high school and community-junior college teacher to equal professional status, CSSA can encourage participation from these levels where appropriate. It did not appear appropriate, for example, to use only instructors of four-year schools to moderate, select, and read papers pertaining to elementary and secondary level speech communication pedagogy (p. 35 of CSSA Conference Announcement).

12. CSSA can meaningfully add to the development of teaching speech-communication in the community-junior college by publishing a separate journal oriented to practical concerns of classroom environment and techniques of teaching instead of research. Should such a journal not be feasible at this time, the editorial staff should seek and develop such a section within the present journal.

13. One last concern is related to the demand for our services. Enrollments are diminishing at many four-year schools and increasing in two-year schools; many speech programs at four-year schools are just holding their own; few are expanding. The question which CSSA and other associations need to explore is how can we best define the marketing strategy for both two- and four-year school speech programs so that both areas are working to full potential in student draw? How can we increase this draw of students? What things can instructors at the four-year college do to help those in the two-year college, and vice-versa? The critical issue, it seems to this writer, is not how to split the pie, but how to make a bigger pie, with regard to the reaching of potential students.

It became evident from the enthusiasm of the participants that speech-communication teachers interested in the community-junior college have many problems and goals unique to other educational institutions, and that a strong and positive effort must be taken by national, regional, and state speech associations to help them solve these problems. The most obvious step is to extend the reach of the community college speech teacher to his constituancy (the community) and to help achieve this, speech associations must provide more informal caucuses, swap-shops, and training sessions for teachers of speech in community-junior colleges.

With the advent of the community-junior college, four-year institutions and the faculty representatives in speech associations were quick to ignore the needs and problems of the speech-communication teacher in those two-year schools. Now, as the community-junior college asserts its educational leadership by its outreach into the community, four-year schools and speech associa-

tions are beginning to realize how important the two-year college is, not only for the specialized training in speech-communication which the community-college can offer, but also in its function as "feeder" of students to the four-year schools. Further, in almost every case, the community-junior college can meet these needs at less cost to the student and taxpayer than can the four-year school.

As the influence of the community-junior college becomes more pervasive, it seems appropriate to cite one of the participants in the caucus, who noted that "community colleges don't necessarily need Central States Speech Association as much as CSSA now needs the community-college teacher."